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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 005349

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [SU](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN DFM SALTANOV ON DARFUR AVIATION AND  
TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT

REF: A. STATE 147667

[1](#)B. MOSCOW 5190

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns: 1.4 (b, d).

[1](#)1. (C) In a November 9 meeting, the Ambassador reiterated to Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov the importance of Russian support for the UN-AU hybrid peacekeeping operation in Darfur (ref a) and urged the GOR to provide heavy lift assets for the operation. Acknowledging the MFA's conservative stance on expanding the Russian peacekeeping presence in Sudan beyond the 120 officers and personnel stationed in the south, the Ambassador urged Saltanov to take a second look at the request, given the mission's importance to the United Nations, the U.S., and the international community as a whole. The Ambassador stressed that even a small contribution would send a strong signal of support.

[1](#)2. (C) Saltanov recognized the importance of the request, while reiterating Russia's cautious approach to the Darfur peacekeeping operation (ref b), given the lack of consensus within Sudan over the role and presence of the hybrid force. However, Saltanov said he accepted the Ambassador's point, appreciated the high-level attention this issue had in Washington, and undertook to take another look at the demarche request.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: Please advise whether the Deputy Secretary intends to contact First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov directly on this issue, so that we can alert his staff. Denisov returns to Moscow on Monday, November 12. While Denisov may be more sympathetic to the request, given his previous tenure at the UN and interest in reinforcing the UNSC's authority, we continue to detect little interagency GOR interest in expanding its peacekeeping presence in Sudan.  
BURNS